

17 March 1972

Laird's Parameters

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Secretary Laird's Request

1. Attached is a copy of General Pursley's note to me outlining the study Secretary Laird has asked us to make. I have circulated it to the Brethren and we discussed it at our 16 March weekly meeting. That conversation highlighted three issues we need to clarify before I can give Laird a firm promise on precisely what he can expect to receive.

a. First is the wisdom, propriety or feasibility of the Agency's undertaking a net assessment task which perforce involves weighing the progress, performance and capabilities of ARVN and, therefore, not only gets us deeply involved in what the U.S. military services have always rather jealously regarded as their business but also inevitably carries overtones of an IG-type review of the whole U.S. military aid and advisory effort.

b. Second, there is the fact that should we undertake this task, it would be impossible to discharge it properly without turning to our military colleagues -- meaning the J-3 components as well as (or even more than) DIA -- for information and data which they possess but we, at this writing, do not. Such information, in turn, simply could not be solicited without our military colleagues' swiftly recognizing what it was that the Secretary of Defense had asked the Agency to do. This revelation or recognition of the Secretary's intent would cause severe heartburn (to put it mildly) in many of our uniformed colleagues.

c. Finally -- quite apart from the determinations we ourselves would have to make on the paper's scope, extent and format -- the factors outlined above would immediately surface the prickly question of coordination. Our military colleagues would almost certainly insist that whatever went forward to the Secretary be a joint, i.e., coordinated, product. This, however, is precisely what Laird has explicitly told me he does not want, expressing his thoughts forcefully in statements interlarded with impolitic and very unflattering aspersions on the services in general and DIA in particular.

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2. My senior colleagues most directly involved -- i.e., Messrs. Walsh, [REDACTED] -- would very much like to review the bidding on this exercise briefly with you before I next see Laird. At this writing, Elizabeth has us on your calendar for 1000 on Monday, 20 March.

3. Please be assured that the above described concerns and uncertainties have not held up initiation of the pick and shovel spadework that will have to be incorporated in anything we send forward. These necessary labors are moving forward so that whatever decisions you render can be implemented with no delay.

[REDACTED]
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

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Attachment

cc: Mr. Walsh w/o att
[REDACTED] w/o att
[REDACTED] /o att
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- 1 - VAS/RAC ✓
- 1 - GAC Chrono
- 1 - Brethren
- 1 - DOD Special Projects

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